

ANNOUNCER: Today's final collaborative conservation showcase features the collaborative efforts of two fine cities. Please welcome Washington, D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams and St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay.

MAYOR WILLIAMS: Hello everyone. My name is Tony Williams and I'm Mayor of Washington, D.C., your nation's capital and as I always say, you should take special interest in what happens in Washington, D.C. because you really should think of it as your second home. I'm proud to be here with my good friend, Mayor Slay from the City of St. Louis which is very important to me because I once worked here and as even more important to me because my wife is from here and believe me, if you know someone from St. Louis, the center of the universe is St. Louis. Mayor, it's wonderful to be here with you. I also want to acknowledge in addition to members of the Cabinet two members of the Cabinet that I've worked with very closely or members from the White House, Secretary Norton who we've worked very closely with our Anacosta Waterfront Initiative that I'll talk about in just a second and also Jim Connaughton who's Chair of the White House Council as we all know on Environmental Quality and very importantly, is a member of my Environmental Council.

One of the things I believe very strongly, you have to believe this in Washington, D.C., is you have to be nondenominational and nonpartisan and nonsecretarian and ecumenical and all these words to get anything done in this city. As a matter of fact if you think about Washington, D.C. being mayor is you're right on ground level. You really don't have a high exalted opinion of yourself when you're mayor.

So for example, I'm sitting here speaking and they have this timer here. I'm sure that for all the exalted guests if you exceed your time there's probably some soft chime. If you're a mayor and you exceed your time, there's probably a trapdoor to an alligator pit. That's how you think when you're mayor.

But trying to do business in Washington, D.C., if you imagine trying to play cards with little flimsy card table and a couple flip-out chairs in the middle of a Buffalo stampede. That's kind of what it's like trying to do business in Washington. It's a very complicated environment.

But Washington is important because it's very demanding, challenging, but Washington is a city and it's important to understand that in my mind when I became mayor it was really clear to me that the environment is not just

about our open spaces as important as they are to the very ethic of our country and identity of country. I grew up with a strong feeling for the environment because both my parents worked in the Post Office.

My dad worked in the Post Office for 35 years. He never took one day off sick leave and I'm sure one reason he did this was because he was a combat veteran from World War II. He had two bronze stars. He was a captain. He was a proud man. He had a tremendous work ethic. I think another reason why he never took a day off was because he had eight kids at home and he probably wanted to get away from the house.

But one of the things they did was they had remember the original 4 X 4s with these Travel-alls. They had a Travel-all and a Ted Williams camper and I don't know how they did it but they put eight kids, a dog, a grandmother and two parents in this Travel-all and we traveled all over the country. I grew up in LA. So I saw my first real rain because it doesn't rain in LA. I saw a river with water in it. I saw a real horse. I realized that horses sometimes kick. I realized that the hard way.

I saw a lot of different things around the country. That's one sense of the environment in our country, that sense of opportunity and aspiration which is so important for children. I don't look at the environment as some shrine that we look at through some window. I look at it as something that we interact with, we express ourselves through and we're greater people because of our treatment of it.

So when I became mayor of Washington, D.C. shortly before I was campaigning and out on the campaign, we wandered over to the Anacosta River while you were talking about mounting this effort and I looked at the Anacosta River and I was just really shocked by the situation of this river about half a mile from the U.S. Capitol and understand the situation of the Anacosta River. I'm looking at my light here. I'm worried about the trapdoor.

Washington was originally a diamond. L'Enfant set up this notion of 10 X 10 square diamond and the center of the diamond was the U.S. Capitol Building and the U.S. Capitol Building and the axis radiating out from the Capitol was to show something in defiance not only of England but of the status quo at the time which was what? Unlike Versailles where the corridors radiated out from the palace of Versailles to show the power of the monarchy radiating out into the universe, the Capitol in the City of

Washington, D.C. was to show the power of the people radiating out into the far stretches of the country.

Well, think about it. East Capitol, South Capitol and the Mall which is really West Capitol all touch water. Now West Capitol the Mall reaches out through the Lincoln Memorial to the Potomac River and while the Potomac River we still have a ways to go and there's much work to be done, the Potomac River has seen a dramatic restoration, revitalization, over the last 20-30 years.

But the Anacosta River, here you have the Anacosta River which was the birthplace of the United States Navy half a mile from the U.S. Capitol, river of history. Think about it. The British came down the Anacosta River and I don't know if this is a proud moment, but anyway, they came down the Anacosta River in 1912 to burn down the city. The Mayor of Baltimore always gives me a hard time of the British burning down Washington, D.C. I said the reason why is because as it turns out, the general in charge of our defense was from Baltimore. So we've been having trouble with Baltimore. We have trouble now with Baltimore trying to get a baseball team. We had trouble in 1912. We've always had trouble with Baltimore.

So to bring back this Anacosta River, understand something very important about the river. Understand that Washington, D.C. like many cities in our country as Mayor McCrory was saying, trying to compete on this international global stage, competitive stage and show that we can do it in a sustainable, environmentally way, trying to restore a river that really should be seen as one of the centers of our city. The Capitol is the center of the city. It's part of the downtown. The neighborhoods are important to the city. The great streets like Pennsylvania Avenue are important to the city.

But a river and the waterfront, the Anacosta River is also very important to the city. But also recognize something else that in a city like Washington, D.C. like many cities in our country, you have a city that's divided rich and poor, very educated, uneducated and just so happens that in the development of the city, the demarcation line that's really dividing the city geographically is the Anacosta River.

So what's also very important is to pick something. Yes, maybe it was just symbolic. Maybe it was just emblematic. But pick something that could actually tie the city together and the Anacosta River has been serving that purpose. Someone asked me as I was out there campaigning, "What are you going to do to bring the races

and bring the different income groups of the city together? When are you going to hold a conference?"

I'm not big on just holding conferences to hold conferences. My idea is that you have to have a vision but you also need some implementation. Have you ever heard of the proverb "A vision without action is a daydream. An action without a vision is a nightmare." Somehow or another you have to bring a vision, an implementation and a reality. So step number one was to bring all the parties together, all the federal departments, the city, all the different commissions, the private sector, all the partners that Mayor McCrory talked about, bring them all together to endorse a general vision for the city. So I'm talking about the different branches, not judiciary, but Congress, the White House, the different federal departments, the business sector, non-profits, all came together to endorse an Anacosta Waterfront Initiative.

The next step was to bring experts from around the country to work with citizens in countless meetings and all these stakeholders in countless meetings to come up with a plan and break it down into component parts. One component part was obviously the commercial, mixed use element of it. A spectacular example of that is that at the foot of South Capitol we're building a new baseball stadium as part of a mixed use project. I can't speak for other parts of the country but this is one baseball stadium where because of this baseball investment you will see millions of dollars of multiplier effect and ancillary development around it because of its site and because of a number of different things.

We work with the Corps of Engineers for example on a multi-stage program of wetlands restoration, very important, because we didn't just decide we're going to embark on some long-term, long-range plan and wait ten years until something happens. We're beginning with initial steps and moving from there.

The same thing with something called the River Walk, an effort to tie the river together with a river walk working with the Department of Interior, with the EPA, working with other federal partners to create a river walk around the waterfront and doing it in stages so that while we have much way to go we already have three or four mouths that are actively being used, actively being enjoyed by the public.

A big part of this has been river cleanup and in an very tough, competitive environment, we've been able to work with the White House and work with the Congress to

get needed funds for the initial planning and know-how on river cleanup on combined sewage overflow. This is a multi-million dollar project as all of you know. But we've embarked on this effort and this has begun. As I think we build momentum, we build an appetite for getting the job done.

So there are a number of different things that are happening on this river and I report them to you. The details of all this, I'm sure you can find in the conference report and you can also find on my website, dc.gov. But I mention them all to you because I really do believe that a new center of our city will not only be as it always has been and always should be the National Mall. A new center for our city in the next century of your nation's capital and the next center will also be as it should be the waterfront and a big part of that center that sense of identity for our nation's capital will be the Anacosta River.

In so doing this, I think we'll show through action, we'll show through our efforts, through the implementation of this strategy, how we can create a sustainable economy that works for everyone in a great city. Thank you all so much for having me with you today. I appreciate it.